

CLASSIFICATION SECRETCOUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

TOPIC Koethen Airfield

EVALUATION

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PLACE OBTAINED

3022766
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DATE OF CONTENT

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DATE OBTAINED

DATE PREPARED

29 January 1954

REFERENCES

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PAGES

3

ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

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1. The following air activity and aircraft were observed at Koethen airfield between 15 December 1953 and 6 January 1954:

15 December. Around 2 p.m., 2 single-engine aircraft were parked at the runway and 2 jet fighters were in front of a hangar of the northeastern edge of the runway. There was no air activity. Visibility was limited to about 2 km.

17 December. Between 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., no air activity was observed. There was a 6/10 overcast at an altitude of 1,500 meters and visibility of 3 km. Only two jet fighters were parked in front of the two hangars at the northeastern section of the field. The western hangar was vacant.

18 and 23 December.

No flights were made.

30 December. Between 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., there was no air activity. Four jet fighters were parked in front of the eastern hangar. The cloud ceiling was at an altitude of 500 meters and visibility was limited to 2 km.

5 January. Between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., nine jet fighters were observed at the field. When the weather was cloudless, jet fighters without auxiliary fuel tanks made individual flights of about 15 minutes duration in the vicinity of the field. Two jet fighters did aerobatics at an altitude of about 3,000 meters.

6 January.

There was a cloud base of about 2,000 meters, a light easterly wind, and visibility of 4 km. At 10 a.m., 13 jet fighters were towed from the hangars to the take-off point. An additional 6 jet fighters remained in front of the hangars. Around 11 a.m., the first take-off was made. Beginning at noon, there was intensive flying by individual aircraft. The jet fighters practiced approaching and flying over the DF station. Shortly before touching ground, the aircraft would take off and repeat this procedure. These practice flights were performed 4 to 6 times.

Air activity was discontinued between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.

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Flying was continued from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Then, air activity was halted, probably because of the bad weather. Subsequently, the aircraft were towed into the hangars. The radar set was not in operation during air activity, except at about 10:45 a.m., when it rotated to the left for a short time; each rotation lasted 40 seconds. 1

- 25X1 2. [redacted] 4 AA guns estimated to be 76-mm, in addition to the 6 x 37-mm AA guns previously seen in the southeastern corner of the field. Another 76-mm AA gun was observed between the revetments in the northeastern section of the field. There probably were more AA guns located at the field. On 30 December, AA troops were engaged in cleaning guns and aiming practices in the southeastern section of the field. On 6 January, an additional 4 x 76-mm AA guns were emplaced in the southeastern corner of the field. 2
3. Around 2:30 p.m. on 24 December, an alert sounded at the field. At 2:45 p.m., the aircraft were towed out of the hangars in the northeastern section of the field and placed in the aircraft revetments around the field. Tractors as well as trucks were used for towing the aircraft. A man wearing flying gear, probably the pilot, was observed standing by the opened cockpit at each aircraft. Eight MiG-15s, [redacted] were counted in the revetments at the southeastern corner near the ammunition dump. There were also two tank trucks. A group of 12 men were assembled around one MiG-15 which was in front of a revetment. The revetments in the northeastern section of the field were occupied by about 14 MiG-15s. Between these aircraft stood 2 radio trucks, 1 tank truck and 1 fire truck. About 6 MiG-15s were later seen parked in the revetments at the northern section of the field in front of the western hangars. These aircraft had been hauled there from the eastern hangars. [redacted] the western hangar was vacant. When the towing operation was completed, the eastern hangars were open and vacant. Four sentries were posted at the road intersection near the ammunition dump. Two of these sentries took over in the trench next to the road. A total of 42 soldiers with guns in firing position were counted in the road ditch along the fence. They were posted 50 meters apart. At 3:30 p.m., the all clear signal was sounded.
- 25X1 4. The following observations were made at the field between 25 December and 8 January:
- 25 December. Between 10:45 a.m. and noon, five MiG-15s circled widely over the field. The weather was sunny. No additional aircraft were seen at the field.
- 28 December. Between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m., a single-engine aircraft made local flights over the field. The weather was rainy. Two alert MiG-15s were parked in front of the eastern hangars.
- 30 December. No activity was observed at the field between 12:20 p.m. and 1:40 p.m.
- 4 January. Between 12:30 p.m. and 1:50 p.m., no aircraft were parked outside of the hangars and no air activity was conducted. Two trucks with sand strewing trailers moved on the snow covered runway.

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5 January. Between 12:40 p.m. and 2 p.m., individual MIG-15s, [redacted] made flights. There was sunny weather. [redacted] Take-offs were made in east-west and west-east directions.

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6 January. There was air activity at the field.

7 January. Flying was practiced during the morning. The sky was partly cloudy. Between 12:30 p.m. and 1:40 p.m., two MIG-15s were parked in front of a hangar at the northeastern section of the field. All the hangars were closed.

8 January. No air activity was conducted at the field. There were snow flurries. 1

5. [redacted] in the town a number of very young air force officers who apparently were strange to the area. A total of 80 vacated dwellings along the perimeter of the town in the vicinity of the field were occupied by Soviet officers and their dependents who had recently arrived. 3

1. [redacted] Comment. Koethen airfield is occupied by a fighter regiment. From the observations made during the test alert it is inferred that the 28 parked MIG-15s represent the total aircraft strength of the regiment, provided that no aircraft of the regiment were at other airfields on the day concerned. The practice flights observed on 6 January 1954 are noteworthy. One Dumbo-type set, 1 Kniferest-type set and 1 Fishnet-type set are located at the field.

2. [redacted] Comment. AA protection at Koethen airfield previously consisted of a battery of 37-mm AA guns, as was also observed at other fighter airfields. It is unknown for what reason AA protection has been increased. Similar observations were also made at other airfields. There are indications that the new AA battery had probably transferred from Doeberitz in November 1953.

3. [redacted] Comment. Information on the evacuation of dwellings for Soviet officers dependents has also been received from a number of airfields.

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